IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 3, 5 to 8, 10 to 18, 21, 23 to 26, 28 to 35 and 37 to 39 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter. Please amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as currently pending in the application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

extracting means for extracting a first image characteristic amount and a second image characteristic amount from an image, the second image characteristic amount being larger than the first image characteristic amount;

judging means for judging a similarity between the first image characteristic amount and the second image characteristic amount extracted by said extracting means; and

selecting means for selecting either the first image characteristic amount or the second image characteristic amount as a characteristic amount of the image in accordance with a judging result of said judging means,

wherein the first image characteristic amount and the second image characteristic amount are obtained by scaling the image and by effecting DCT processing and quantization processing on the scaled image and by extracting several coefficients among coefficients obtained by a processing result from a low frequency component side.

2. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus according

to claim 1, wherein, if said judging means judges that the first image characteristic amount and the second image characteristic amount are similar to each other, said selecting means selects the first image characteristic amount, and, if said judging means judges that the first image characteristic amount and the second image characteristic amount are not similar to each other, said selecting means selects the second image characteristic amount.

3. to 18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:

an extracting step of extracting a first image characteristic amount and a second image characteristic amount from an image, the second image characteristic amount being larger than the first image characteristic amount;

a judging step of judging a similarity between the first image characteristic amount and the second image characteristic amount extracted in said extracting step; and

a selecting step of selecting either the first image characteristic amount or the second image characteristic amount as a characteristic amount of the image in accordance with a judging result of said judging step,

wherein the first image characteristic amount and the second image characteristic amount are obtained by scaling the image and by effecting DCT processing and quantization processing on the scaled image and by extracting several coefficients among coefficients obtained by a processing result from a low frequency component side.

20. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 19, wherein if said judging step judges that the first image characteristic amount and the second image characteristic amount are similar to each other, said selecting step selects the first image characteristic amount, and, if said judging step judges that the first image characteristic amount and the second image characteristic amount are not similar to each other, said selecting step selects the second image characteristic amount.

21. to 35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium on which is stored a computer-executable program, the program comprising:

program code for [[a]] an extracting step of extracting a first image characteristic amount and a second image characteristic amount from an image, the second image characteristic amount being larger than the first image characteristic amount;

program code for a judging step of judging a similarity between the first image characteristic amount and the second image characteristic amount extracted by said code for an extracting step; and

program code for a selecting step of selecting either the first image characteristic amount or the second image characteristic amount as a characteristic amount of the image in accordance with a judging result of said code for a judging step,

wherein the first image characteristic amount and the second image

characteristic amount are obtained by scaling the image and by effecting DCT processing and quantization processing on the scaled image and by extracting several coefficients among coefficients obtained by a processing result from a low frequency component side.

37. to 39. (Canceled)